

# The Land Is Ours

Newsletter 20

Anti-copyright

April 2001



## Genocide in the countryside

The current foot & mouth crisis has shown how the government, MAFF and the National Farmers Union are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths (through mass slaughtering of animals) to protect the reputation of the UK intensively-farmed livestock export industry. Mass slaughter of animals has occurred to protect the reputation of this industry whose intensive farming methods deserve a long-overdue execution. Whilst the source of infection was identified as an Asian strain from imported meat, while the spread of the disease has been due to increased centralisation of livestock distribution, the fact is that the underlying cause is over-consumption of meat which encourages the monstrous size of this 'industry' world-wide.

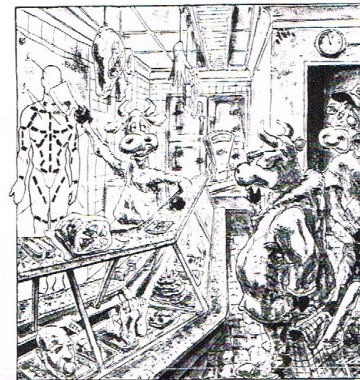
The totalitarian jack-boot of MAFF, acting like a rogue police state, has been culling animals with the force of Stalinist iron-rule, combined with the subsequent screening of information (figures for the amount of animals culled have mysteriously stopped being reported by this Orwellian ministry). One case in point in Ballow, Gloucestershire illustrates this when, after the vet on the ground diagnosed symptoms 'indicating FMD' on one single animal on 09/04, while he specifically would not condemn the herd, MAFF ordered the cull of all animals on the farm (and neighbouring farms - total 3,000) over the telephone. The next day, the blood test results of the herd including the supposed infected animal were shown to be negative.

**This agricultural crisis has been going on for 50 years!**  
The fact is that the crisis occurring in British agriculture has been going on for 50 years, certainly since the early 1970's when intensive CAP-supported chemically dependant industrial agriculture first started to kick in. Post-war intensive agriculture has been responsible for the loss of 97% of British meadows, as well as the destruction of soil and pollution of watercourses. The subsidy-driven collateral treadmill which rises in accordance of land area has meant that farmers are enmeshed in a death-pact of relying on support payments, and getting into greater levels of debt to afford mechanisation, as those farmers who cannot keep-up are threshed out of the system. The need for high rates of return on investments means intensive monoculture and larger herds crammed into huge production units. However the sector as a whole is being stretched by falling world commodity prices as transnationals dominate commodity trading and liberalisation means imports from intensive production in low-income countries are cheaper (quite apart from the current high pound). For the majority within UK agriculture, the reality is bankruptcy.

Yet, the larger agribusinesses of the home counties are sure to survive and even prosper, able to spread costs in a restructuring industry as large-scale intensive production enables them to continue to guarantee market share, while also being the lynch-pin domestic supply-estates for supermarkets. We could even see larger farmers cynically diversify and gear sections of their land area to exploit new market inroads into organic production, while they continue to practice intensive monoculture and chemical saturation of soil on the remainder of their estates. Is this why the NFU have traditionally been seen to not encourage links with the organic movement, because the vested interests they represent wanted to keep smaller farmers in the dark about it and hoard the market in-roads to this new market all to themselves? The government's rural white paper was also quite clear about the future direction of agriculture. In it, they referred to a "major restructuring in the industry". There is no mention of how, if at all, small and family farms are to be protected from pressures for concentration of land,

## Beyond Foot and MAFF Disease

As the foot and mouth saga has progressed the public have gradually become aware that it is not FMD which is fatal to livestock but the Ministry of Agriculture. MAFF is annihilating healthy British animals because they are in danger of contracting a non-fatal disease which causes nasty gumboils and footsores, which is successfully treated with salt and Stockholm tar, and which many sensible societies have learnt to accept and accommodate (at the expense of their export trade to the "clean" countries). Culling every animal within sight of the disease is the best way not to build up natural resistance in the national herd. The epidemic is not simply "a disaster waiting to happen"; it is a disaster elicited by MAFF's arrogant disregard for the way diseases, immune systems and the whole of Nature works.



What does this bureaucratically engineered apocalypse mean in terms of future land ownership patterns? One thing is certain: MAFF has so disgraced itself that the calls to have it abolished, which were loud enough last year, will be repeated with greater and probably overwhelming force after the election.

What will replace MAFF? Probably a rural ministry headed by a diligent, well-meaning but not very far-sighted minister like Michael Meacher, possibly backed up by Eliot Morley who sits somewhat uncomfortably in MAFF.

The brief of this ministry will be to manage England's rural land for the benefit of the environment and the rural economy, rather than just farmers.

And what will this ministry decide? It will be subject to all the usual influence from pressure groups. Which pressure groups in particular? The ones that own the countryside, namely the Country Land and Business Association (until recently the Country Landowners Association), the National Farmers Union, the horse lobby, the National Trust, the Council for

the Protection of Rural England etc.

And what will these pressure groups be saying? That agriculture is up the creek; that we have to import most of our food, fibre and timber because the World Trade Organisation says it is uneconomic to do otherwise; and that for "agriculture" to survive it has to diversify. Into what? Well, anything that makes money, which at this point in time means tourism, conference centres, telecottages and industrial use of farm buildings.

A vision of this future was provided by the recent amendment to Planning Policy Guidance 7 on the Countryside, which deleted specifications tying farm diversification to land-based use, and which now allows farms to move into any industrial activity they like, as long as it is "consistent in scale with a rural location"? on the scale of a 500 sow pig unit for example?

This means that people looking to buy land and buildings for a box scheme, or an organic holding, or a free range egg unit will have to compete with IT firms or industrialists looking for a nice leafy site for expansion.

When we asked the DETR how this amendment was introduced so suddenly, they said that it was the outcome of a seminar held on 26 May attended by the CLA, the NFU, the British Horse Industry Confederation, the Thoroughbred Breeders Association, the National Trust, the CPRE and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. The Land Is Ours weren't consulted, nor were the Soil Association, the Small and Family Farms Alliance, the Womens Institute, RSPB or Friends of the Earth.

This we suspect is likely to be the dominant pattern of land allocation over the next few years. Agriculture is buggered, so let landowners diversify into whatever frivolity is profitable; meanwhile we'll buy all our food, clothing and timber from the international market, where we don't have to think about the environmental consequences.

The Land Is Ours, in common with a number of other organisations, supports something different. Access to land for people who want to produce food and clothing sustainably; and who, when their animals get some poxy disease, nurse them through it, and build up resistance, regardless of the economic consequences, like they would their own children.

*(The author of the above keeps cows and pigs.)*

**'Join the Real Rural debate'** Do we want Britain to remain a seriously capable food producing nation? What do think? Have your say at Rural Futures; a new coalition of nine stakeholder organisations (including TLIO) who have agreed a 7 point agenda. Rural Futures aims to generate debate around some of the deeper questions affecting the countryside. In the reports section you will find some interesting new thinking such as Chris Rose's call for a 'Campaign Against Rural England' and other papers and articles.

Visit our website at: [www.ruralfutures.org](http://www.ruralfutures.org)  
Simon Fairlie is the TLIO spokesperson for Rural Futures. To contact him: ring : 01460 249 204 (thurs)

# Scotland and the draft Land Reform Bill

by Peter Gibb Director Land Reform Scotland

On 22nd February 2001, the devolved Scottish government published a Draft Land Reform Bill. The Bill sets out provisions for public rights of access over land (see below), community right to buy and, separately,crofting community right to buy. The Bill is published within a two hundred page consultation document called Land Reform - The Draft Bill, and is accompanied by a forty-two A4 page draft access code - A Draft Scottish Outdoor Access Code - Public access to the outdoors: rights and responsibilities.

It must be said that the size of these documents prohibit the democratic process merely by their size. It is not clear why a code of conduct for folk moving around the country on foot, has to be more substantial than the equivalent code for our fast road users (The Highway Code).

The problem will be even more evident in the forthcoming Land Conditions (Scotland) Bill - establishing Scotland's post-feudal land tenure system - which will come in at a full six hundred pages. Scottish land reformers are suffering the early symptoms of consultation fatigue - not an auspicious sign for our emerging new politics and new democracy.

In the land reform bill itself, the provisions for right to buy have been the subject of considerable criticism by reformers. Andy Wightman, the respected Scottish commentator on land issues, has prepared an analysis of the legislative proposals, on behalf of the Caledonia Centre for Social Development. Wightman's comments crystallise much of the current concern about the path land reform is taking in Scotland. Wightman says, that under the proposed legislation, the greater power remains in the hands of existing landowners... Considerable power is also given to Ministers. Very little power by contrast is given to communities. The hurdles put in the way of communities are formidable not least because they are expected to jump through a significant number of hoops simply in order to have the right at some point in the indeterminate future [to make use of the proposed legal provisions for purchase]... Arguably folk have enough to do in their lives without having to do all this for an eventuality which may never arise!

It has been pointed out that, of the handful of community buy-outs that have been already achieved in Scotland in the last few years, not one of them - because of the onerous rules of compliance - would have been able to benefit from the provisions of this proposed new right-to-buy legislation. Dammings, Wightman concludes: Scotland has the most concentrated pattern of private landownership in the world. Fully half of the privately-owned rural land in the country is owned by just 343 landowners and it is their attitudes, motivations and circumstances that will determine whether anything at all changes as a consequence of this bill.

## 'Investing in People and Land'

New Report from the Countryside Agency due out:

Commentators from William Cobbett, through Oliver Goldsmith to H.J. Massingham, have long lamented the decline of England's rural economy and self-sufficiency: "A time there was, ere England's griefs began, When every road of ground maintain'd its man; For him light labour spread its wholesome store, Just gave what life requir'd but gave no more; His best companions, innocence and health, And his best riches, ignorance of wealth."

But over the past half-century, conventional agriculture and its bankers have been selling the family silver like never before. Effectively farmers have been converting the capital of soil fertility into the income of yields, partly driven by the need to service loans for ever more capital-intensive equipment and processes.

The result is that much of the complexity and diversity of both rural settlements and their surrounding ecosystems have been stripped away. This erosion has been accompanied by the tendency of money markets to concentrate investment and financial wealth in urban areas where returns on investment are highest, draining outlying areas of needed financial resources and

A few land reformers have been more hopeful. Alastair McIntosh, of Edinburgh's Centre for Human Ecology, in his pamphlet Land Reform & Community in Scotland (just published by Land Reform Scotland in its Pocket of Land series), has written that while modest, these measures nevertheless represent a shift in the axis of power from a position where the landowner had total autonomy to one where the community can now seriously compromise [speculation].

But land reformers in Scotland are not expecting the earth to move, as a result of the present bill. Not much reform is expected to follow Scotland's land reform bill. Land Reform Scotland has argued that much of the present agenda for land reform in Scotland is based on a far-too shallow analysis of the problems in hand; and that a far more radical approach will be required. McIntosh, in his pamphlet, concludes: Many Scottish land reform campaigners are disappointed that current legislation makes no provision for land value taxation - but, Pressure will grow.

### Scottish Land Reform Bill & Access

Importantly, the Bill recognises that a right of responsible access should exist. A Draft Scottish Outdoor Access Code accompanies the draft Land Reform Bill and like the draft Bill is subject to public consultation. The draft Code outlines the rights and responsibilities associated with the proposed right of access and should be read alongside the draft Bill. There will be a twelve-week consultation period, closing on 18 May 2001. However the extent of the right, exemptions to the right, obligations on landowners and enforcement will all be issues that spark debate. Most likely the debate will focus on: ■ restriction of access rights; ■ exclusion of night-time access; possibly reviving bid to exclude water; ■ liability issues; ■ a perceived emphasis in the legislation towards the land managing interest; ■ land managers' concerns about lack of safeguards; ■ strengthening of local authority powers and duties.

For those working at the 'coal-face', particularly local authorities, we are indeed, living in interesting times.

The consultation document, including the draft Bill and the access code, is available on-line at: <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/landreform/rb-dr-01.asp>>.

Paper copies (the consultation document and code are published separately) are available by contacting Andrew L. Taylor of the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department (ph. 0131 244 4447), or from The Stationery Office Bookshop (ph. 0870 606 5566). Wightmans analysis, and other briefings on Scottish land reform, are available from:

<[www.caledonia.org.uk/land/](http://www.caledonia.org.uk/land/)>.

Details of Land Reform Scotland's Pocket of Land series of pamphlets is available from: <[office@LandReformScotland.org](mailto:office@LandReformScotland.org)>.

undermining their capacity to respond to changing economic conditions. We can now see the impacts; up to a 50% reduction in the organic matter content of intensively farmed soils in the past 20 years', and in rural communities, three sub-post offices being closed every week since 1989.

'Investing in People and Land', a yet to be published report from the Countryside Agency offers an exciting way forward for the sustainability of rural communities. It proposes a very practical way to start a new paradigm shift, towards valuing people over paper profits, and the long-term health of the land over short-term gain. This can be done, it argues, by the development of Community and Asset Reinvestment Trusts (CARTs). The CARTs would provide a way to deliver access to land, affordable housing, and specialist finance and business enterprise support in rural areas.

The first part of the report is based on research carried out by the authors in Suffolk, North Lancashire and West Wessex, which looked at people's personal credit needs, support for small business, the community and voluntary sector, farming and housing. Their conclusion was that the present gaps between existing credit supply and demand for it at affordable levels excludes many people wanting to live and work in rural areas. Suffolk, North Lancashire and West Wessex were chosen because there is work already going on in each of them to provide the foundation upon which a CART could be established. The form a CART would take

## Latest Issue of ECOS

We Want Local Shops for Local People!!

The latest issue of ECOS (A Review of Conservation - quarterly journal of the British Association of Nature Conservationists [BANC], i:3, Vol. 21), title is "Sticky money in the countryside", refers to the need for regeneration of communities via local economic activity generated by producers selling to the immediate area (e.g. farmers markets) coupled with the purchase of locally-sourced goods by the same producers, so that money is kept in the local economy (this applies to urban as well as rural areas).

Main featured articles in full: "The End of Agriculture" (by Simon from TLIO/Chapter7), "Time to campaign against Rural England" (Chris Rose), "Bringing the land back home" (Sophie Poklewski Koziell), "Sustaining local food" (Charles Couzens), "Words that work: job creation in wood product businesses" (Andy Nisbet), "Green Gateway - connecting wildlife with rural life", and "Managing the right to roam" (Charlotte Mansley)...Of additional interest to activists, there features an article entitled "Between a rock and hard science: exploring the environment through performance", written by Bronislaw Szerszynski & Sue Weldon, on the conference 'Between Nature: Explorations in Ecology & Performance' - a collaboration between the Centre for the Study of Environment Change and the Department of Theatre Studies held at Lancaster University in July 2000.

To obtain a Copy of ECOS, you have to subscribe to BANC. 1-year's subscription (4 issues) costs £19, unwaged/student £12.50. Send a cheque/postal order to: BANC membership services, Lings House, Billing Lings, Northampton NN3-8BE.

To order any individual back-issues (send a cheque for £7 each). Last Issues include Vol. 21 (Issue 2) - "Biodiversity: Spin & Substance", and Vol.21 (Issue 1) "The Theatre of Protest", including 2 articles by Graeme Chesters, the first being a critique of MayDay 2000 & it's media reaction, and the 2nd focusing on the concept of carnival protest first tried by Reclaim the Streets as a means to maintain a collective identity for radical environmentalism. Also featured are articles on the more long-term form of consciousness-raising such as low-impact living in the piece by Lucy Nichol on "Green livelihoods in the countryside and the planning system".

would vary in each.

The second part of the report describes an appropriate structure (the CART itself), and how to develop it, based on two other models, the Community Reinvestment Trust and the Community Land Trust, both of which have working examples in the UK and abroad. Each CART would be able to:

- Hold and use community assets for the benefit of the community, such as village halls, sub-post offices or starter farms;
- Develop land for affordable housing kept within the community under a restrictive covenant;
- Raise investment from private and public sources;
- Issue loans for local people for home improvements, new start-ups and community enterprises;
- Work with existing community organisations, such as credit unions, development trusts and food co-ops;
- Enable people to deliver more services at local level. The CART has quite a complex structure, consisting of a linked Industrial and Provident Society, Charity and company limited by guarantee. This is necessary to provide it with the powers needed for it to be able to deliver the wide range of benefits outlined above. The authors provide timescales and budgets needed to bring a CART into existence, and end with the challenge "that national pilot projects be established to test the model in the three case-study areas", and that "the Countryside Agency [should become] the national

## Various News

### Gargoyle Wharf Community action Group(GWCAG) - update

The judicial review situation has changed, with developer Rialto sending in additional information to Wandsworth Council to cover previous flaws in their Environmental statement. Wandsworth Borough Council say this will be circulated for comment to all previous objectors to the scheme, and a new officer's report prepared. This will then go to the Planning Committee (and will be inevitably passed). This virtually concedes accuracy of GWCAG's allegations (detailed by Environmental law solicitors R.Buxton) re: flawed decision to grant previous planning permission.

High court hearing on 18th June will go ahead, but probably now limited to question of determining costs. GWCAG thinks - what next? Possibly Human Rights angle, as we've been allowed no full inquiry into Rialto's scheme for 16 storey blocks along the riverfront.

### Local Heritage Initiative

"Those who own the past own the future"

Despite this being funded through the lottery, this fund is worth a look. It is aimed at new groups and communities who wish to celebrate or record local heritage be it natural heritage, industrial heritage or whatever. One major flaw regarding this fund, however, is that it seems to have overlooked the heritage of travellers/nomadic peoples, as it's slant is all about local people (i.e. settled) communities. It does, however, welcome applications from ethnic minorities and the "socially excluded" (= if this is you and you want to make sure your alternative heritage is not overlooked, grab a form!)

The grants are normally between £3k and £15k. To get an information/application pack, contact: LHI Information, 11 University Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT7 1FY. Tel. No. 0870-9000401.

### Rest in Protest RIP

It seems that even the dead need to be vigilant against the 'ghoulsh' property developer', ever ready to build upon any green space left. In large cities, often it's only the cemeteries left as open space. Bellway Homes Ltd are currently building an estate on Woodgrange Cemetery, Manor Park, London & have already dug up 15,000 bodies in the process. Often these graves are of those killed during the Blitz & buried in mass graves. Strangely, however, a series of fires have occurred at the site causing damage to the building work. Is it the work of vengeful spirits or disgruntled descendants? Forest gate CID don't know, nor do the 24 hour security guards!

champion of the Community and Asset Reinvestment Trust concept in rural areas".

The Countryside Agency had planned to launch the report in March from a village hall in North Lancashire, one of the study areas, and in the middle of a foot and mouth affected area. "We cancelled because of the current epidemic", said an Agency spokesperson. "We do want to get it out into the public domain as soon as possible, and expect it to generate a lot of interest". When the immediate and terrible crisis in the farming industry is over, radical decisions will have to be taken to re-establish and re-invest in British agriculture and land use on a more sustainable footing. The hope must be that the Countryside Agency, and others who are currently donating large amounts of money for farmers in distress, will have the courage and vision to turn the ideas expressed in this important report into reality, as quickly as possible. Would the readers of the Daily Mail respond to an appeal for funds to invest in the first CART? Maybe we should ask them, and the Duke of Westminster and the Barbour clothing company too. Copies of the report are not yet available, but for more information about CARTs you can contact one of the reports authors: Bob Paterson, at the Centre for Community Finance Solutions, The University of Salford, The Crescent, Salford M5 4WT. Telephone 0161 295 4454

Jonathan Brown

## International

### Mexico

#### March of the Zapatistas

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) marched triumphantly into the main square in Mexico City on Sunday March 11th to crowds of over 200,000. The 24 commanders, in full uniform and masks but no weapons refused to leave Mexico City until all their prisoners were released, Mexican troops withdrawn from the state of Chiapas and implementation of the San Andres Peace Accord to enshrine self-determination for 10 million indigenous Mexicans was passed (the act was agreed to in 1996 but promptly ignored by the previous Zedillo government). EZLN subcommandante Marcos was subsequently invited to meet with the new president Vicente Fox to discuss the constitutional recognition of indigenous rights and culture - the subject of the Third national Indigenous Congress. However, the talks broke down at the first time of asking. A further attempt was reported as having took place.

The march into the capital was the last stage of a tour which has seen the Zapatistas stopping and speaking to thousands of supporters in towns and cities across the country. As a result 50 of the 56 indigenous ethnic groups have now united with them to form a National Indigenous Congress.

The one and a half thousand EZLN communities which cover nearly a third of the area of Chiapas, are divided into 35 autonomous municipalities which organise and operate collectively. Often running the municipalities communally, the Zapatistas are organising their own education projects, their own water projects, as well as having their own army. The role of women in particular has changed dramatically, with women taking part in the decision-making process on an equal level with men, and a third of the EZLN made up of women. As Infantry Major Anna Maria says "It is just not the Zapatista men who have their rights, but now the women as well".

Three-quarters of Mexico's 97 million population are below the poverty-line, a figure set to rise in 20-30 years time.

For further reading, check out the most excellent The Zapatistas: A rough guide, ChiapasLink, PO Box 79, 82 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB

## World Bank ignores Dam Commission guidelines

Nearly 100 non-governmental organizations have criticised the World Bank for refusing to adopt guidelines recommended by the groundbreaking World Commission on Dams report last year which were aimed at limiting the construction of destructive large dams.

The World Commission on Dams (WCD), an independent body which the Bank had a hand in establishing, announced in November that priority be put on optimising existing water and energy facilities rather than on new large dam projects and that all decisions to build new dams

must be based on agreements with affected communities. At the report's release, Bank President James Wolfensohn described it as impressive, saying it showed that common ground could be found "among people of good faith coming from very diverse starting points." But, now the World Bank is singing a different tune, saying it will only use the guidelines proffered by the WCD as reference points rather than adopt them as rules governing its operation.

"We believe that the position which the World Bank and its representatives have taken on the WCD is ill-advised, disappointing and in parts inappropriate," notes a letter sent out to Wolfensohn this week by a network of 87 organizations and movements from 30 countries. "If the Bank simply builds its position on the views of dam-building governments it should refrain

from being an honest broker, but should make it clear that it represents one interest group in a conflictive debate," says the letter initiated by Swiss-based NGO, the Berne Declaration, and the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People.

The NGOs charge that following the release of the report a Bank task-force studied it, management consulted with a number of governments supporting big dams and came up with the new stance, even though the Bank together with the World Conservation Union were behind the establishment of the WCD.

The WCD consisted of 12 prominent figures representing diverse views on big dam construction, including those of activists. It was headed by South African government minister Kader Asmal. Its objectives were to review the development effectiveness of large dams and develop international standards for planning, designing construction and decommissioning of dams. After two years of study, WCD concluded that large dams have largely failed to provide as much electricity, as much water or control as many floods as their backers claim. Instead they have produced massive forced resettlements, environmental degradation and most often benefited those at the top at the expense of poor rural communities. The WCD therefore recommended that no dam be built without the agreement of affected people, that comprehensive and participatory needs assessments be developed before new dams were built and periodic reviews be done on existing dams to assess their safety and where necessary decommission some. Furthermore, ways of paying reparations for those who suffered from big dam constructions had to be found.

The WCD estimates that between 40 and 80 million people have been displaced by large dams (defined as being higher than 15 meters), and in India and China alone, as many as 58 million people could have been displaced between 1950 and 1990. The World Bank itself holds the reputation of being the largest single source of financing for large dam construction around the world, even though its involvement has waned in the face of intense public pressure.

## Argentina

MOCASE is a campesino movement in Santiago del Estero, in the Chaco Region of North Argentina. It is made up of more than 8,500 families, mostly of Quechua ethnicity, who are defending their right to legally possess the land they have occupied for decades. Despite the fact that the Argentine Constitution grants legal entitlement to those that have occupied land for 20 years, MOCASE members have suffered continuous intimidation and violence from the police and land barons.

The quebracho tree only grows in the Gran Chaco region. From the mid-19th century onwards more than ten million hectares of quebracho forest have been felled, mostly by companies with British capital, to provide hardwood for railway sleepers and tannin for the leather industry. The forestry companies established huge estates, where the loggers from Santiago were the serfs in these latter-day feudal systems.

From the 1940s onwards, logging in the region gradually ceased to provide 'acceptable' profit margins, so the entrepreneurs left for pastures new, leaving unemployment and poverty in their wake. The unemployed families settled on the land abandoned by the timberyards; they opened up roads, built schools and worked the land, growing mainly cotton and vegetables.

Since the 80s, various co-operative or trade-union type organisations have arisen to represent the campesinos' interests, and in 1989 MOCASE was formed. In recent years they have suffered attacks and beatings, attempts to evict them with bulldozers, threatening phone calls to their offices and false stories planted in the local press; they have been illegally detained, beaten and tortured in the cells of rural police stations.

For more information, and to send messages of solidarity, e-mail: [cenep@amet.com.ar](mailto:cenep@amet.com.ar) (Spanish) or [Mapucama@hotmail.com](mailto:Mapucama@hotmail.com) (English)

# TLIO NEWS:

**The Big May Hot Squat** (due to have been between the 15th-31st May) - to transform a derelict site in a 2-week occupation has been cancelled, but for positive reasons! The site has suddenly been bought by a new party, involving the help of the local area's Regional Development Agency, intending to involve the local community to draw up plans to develop the site. We still will not reveal the location of this site so as not to draw attention to it now it is undergoing this change of ownership with apparent local collaboration working for the positive.

## Chapter 7 News

Chapter 7 have prepared their first DIY planning briefing for low-impact dwellers and those out there attempting to live on the land. The latest issue of Chapter 7 News (Spring 2001 - issue no.6) is out now as well, featuring articles about the latest controversial revision to PPG-7, and other interesting tit-bits from land-based communities around the British Isles.

To get an annual subscription to Chapter-7 News, send a cheque or postal order for £5 (£3 unwaged) with address & contact details to: Chapter-7, The Potato Store, Flaxdrayton Farm, South Petherton, Somerset TA13.

## Country Strife

Activists in TLIO are preparing a new publication which intends to firmly take issue with some of the underlying vested interests at the heart of the agenda of those self-appointed standard-bearers for the voice of the countryside such as the CLA, NFU and particularly the Countryside Alliance. The editorial team taking this on have already put together some material to go into this "magazine" (the name is a take on the magazine Country-Life), but they require some more stuff to complete it. If YOU have any snippets, articles, jokes, funny illustrations, photographs, short observations or rantings, please share them with us as soon as possible! Contributions are most welcome! **Please contact Jaffa on : 07909 973300**

## 'Left of centre' Perspective on the Rural Debate

This long article of the above working title will shortly be available in the form of a pamphlet. It has arisen out of the above mentioned ongoing project, and as a response to Chris Rose's article in the latest issue of ECOS, entitled "Time to campaign against 'rural England'?" **Contact Simon on 01935-881975 for more details.**

## Call for another Land Essays

The editor of this newsletter is also collecting articles for a future 'Land Essays'. Some of the articles in the above mentioned compilations may also feature, as well as a synopsis of the main contributions to the Rural Futures website. The interrelationship between

globalisation of agriculture and trade and destruction of rural land-based livelihoods, as is the ensuing focus within Rural Futures, will be a key theme for this issue. However, we are intending that this particular compendium to become a compilation of articles about land-issues from around the world - a more in-depth version of this newsletter infact.

**If you think you could contribute an article to this issue, please contact Mark on: 020 8357-8504, or throw caution-to-the-wind and send in your contributions to TLIO's postal address.**

## Diggers Memorial Stone

The Diggers Memorial Stone now has a permanent home. On Sunday 10th December 2000, Andrew Whittle (who sculpted the stone) erected this historic monument to the Diggers and Gerrard Winstanley on a small bit of heath near to Weybridge railway station. A 'Diggers Trail' is well under way and is due to open in late summer when we promise a big celebration - see the next issue or visit the website closer to the time for further updates.

## Easter Garden - Bristol

It's along time since TLIO was active in Bristol, but it's legacy lives on. The garden created by TLIO activists over 4 years ago goes from strength to strength. The developer who had been claiming ownership of the site has been dealt with and the truth over the garden's lack of owner firmly established. Local residents have now formed a limited company to ensure the garden remains a public free space in perpetuity.

## TLIO DIARY:

**Sat 28th - Sun 29th April : Radical Routes Gathering.** Venue location: Warwick/Leamington Spa. To receive more details, ring Keveral Farm on 01503 250-748

**Tuesday 1st May - MayDay Monopoly** disOwn it all. Celebrate MayDay by playing Monopoly. Get involved by organising yer own autonomous actions, choose a Monopoly theme: housing, debt, railways, privatised utilities, prisons, etc. Followed by a Carnavalesque celebration of the days events in a mass action at Oxford Street at 4pm. Bring White overalls, padding, helmets, inflatable toys and a sense of fun, adventure and humour. *For more info phone the action line on 07960-973-847 or get the game guide to Mayday Monopoly send an SAE to BM Mayday, London, WC1N 3XX.*

There will also be a Critical Mass bike ride on the day. Meet outside Marylebone Station for West End Tour, or Liverpool St for a city tour. Both start 7.30 am, and will meet up for a game of Disown It All Monopoly

**Birmingham: Party and Protest against Capitalism.** Mayday direct action. Meet 12.30 pm outside Virgin Megastore, Corporation Street. *Info: 07980 415577*

**Glasgow Mayday 2001,** meet 12.30pm Buchanan St Underground, bring music, costumes, good vibes.

**16th -17th May - National Organic Gardening Weekend.** Organic gardeners throughout the country will be opening up their gardens to the general public. *Contact HDRA for more info 024 76303517*

**Sat 19th May - 27th Annual Levellers Day,** Warwick Hall Garden, Burford, Oxon. This year's theme: "Equality - the awkward ideal". Guest speakers: Imran Khan (solicitor of the Lawrence family), Jean Lambert MEP & Prof. Francis Stewart. Special guest: Tony Benn MP. Admission £6.

**2nd June - Strawberry Fayre, Cambridge.** Free - and one of the best festivals of the summer *Tel: 01223 560160*

**Thurs 7th June: Low Impact Dwellings - a slideshow and talk,** by Selena Merrett, about the growing countryside low-impact movement, making links with planners, and ideas and information for "would be" eco-settlers. *At: SS Mary & John Church Hall, Cowley Road, Oxford (near the Bingo Hall).*

**8th- 17th June - Arts, Activism, & Social Change Workshop.** A 9-day intensive workshop intended for artists and activists looking to gain practical experience with designing and composing activist art projects. Participants will receive hands-on experience in creating a wide array of activist art, including puppetry, dance, street theatre, songwriting, murals, and culture jamming. *Tel 1 (802) 454-8493*

**23rd June - Alternative Glastonbury.** 24 hour extravaganza with Firestarter Stage and some of the most amazing festival rumours ever. Still TBC *Tel: 0208 509 3353*

**1st to 5th August - Earth First! Summer Gathering.** Venue location to be confirmed.

**August - TLIO Gathering.** Date & venue to be confirmed.

*For a more comprehensive list of all events and festivals happening this summer, contact: <http://www.schnnews.org.uk/guide.htm>*

## Call to all readers!

We are asking those of you out there who are on e-mail from now on instead get future issues of the TLIO newsletter in an electronic format, so that we can save money on postage.

Please let us know your e-mail details if you haven't already, by e-mailing us at: [office@tlio.demon.co.uk](mailto:office@tlio.demon.co.uk) Thankyou!

If you still intend to receive the newsletter via post, please note the value of your postal-send code on your address label (either last!, 2, 3 or E). This value corresponds to how many future newsletters you are still to receive. Last! means this current issue is your last! 'E' means you will receive newsletters indefinitely for the immediate future (recipients qualify for 'E' if they are either: networking contacts / organisations, collective groups / social centres, long-term supporters, or continually active TLIO people.

**NB: Next Issue, Issue No.21, out this summer.**

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